

CLAIMS

I claim:

1. An interior rear seat for a motor vehicle, the seat comprising:
 - 5 - a main seat located in a vehicle rear cabin portion, the main seat having generally opposed first and second end side portions thereof;
 - a first rear interior side panel connected to a first inner vehicle skin surface and located adjacent a first inwardly projecting wheel arch of the vehicle, the first side panel having a first seating portion thereof, the first
10 seating portion being continuous with the first end side portion so as to extend the main seat adjacent the first wheel arch.
2. The seat of claim 1, further including:
 - 15 - a second rear interior side panel connected to a second inner vehicle skin surface and located adjacent a second inwardly projecting wheel arch of the vehicle, the second side panel having a second seating portion thereof, the second seating portion being continuous with the second end side portion so as to extend the main seat adjacent the second wheel arch.
- 20 3. The seat of claim 1, wherein the first side panel includes:
 - generally opposed first and second sections;
 - an intermediate section extending between the first and second sections, the intermediate section forming the first seating portion.

4. The seat of claim 3, wherein the intermediate section is a ledge forming the first seating portion.

5. The seat of claim 4, wherein the main seat defines a seating surface thereof, the ledge defining a ledge surface thereof, the ledge surface being substantially aligned with the seating surface so as to be continuous therewith.

6. The seat of claim 5, wherein the main seat defines a backrest surface thereof and has a front end portion thereof, the ledge extending frontwardly from a location adjacent the backrest surface at the first end side portion to a location adjacent the front end portion at the first end side portion.

7. The seat of claim 6, wherein the ledge extends frontwardly beyond the front end portion of the main seat.

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8. The seat of claim 2, wherein the main seat includes an armrest, the armrest being substantially centered between the first and second end side portions.

9. The seat of claim 8, wherein the armrest is pivotally connected to a backrest portion of the main seat, the armrest being pivotable between a closed position and an open position.

10. The seat of claim 1, wherein the main seat is reclinable between an upright position and a reclined position.

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11. The seat of claim 10, wherein the main seat includes a legrest, the legrest being retractable between a retracted position when the main seat is in the upright position and an extended position when the main seat is in the reclined position.

12. A motor vehicle for taxiing passengers, the vehicle comprising an interior rear seat located inside a rear cabin portion thereof, the rear seat including:

- 10 a main seat located in the vehicle rear cabin portion, the main seat having generally opposed first and second end side portions thereof;
- a first rear interior side panel connected to a first inner vehicle skin surface and located adjacent a first inwardly projecting wheel arch of the vehicle, the first side panel having a first seating portion thereof, the first seating portion being continuous with the first end side portion so as to extend the main seat adjacent the first wheel arch.

13. The vehicle of claim 12, wherein the rear seat further includes:

- a second rear interior side panel connected to a second inner vehicle skin surface and located adjacent a second inwardly projecting wheel arch of the vehicle, the second side panel having a second seating portion thereof, the second seating portion being continuous with the second end side portion so as to extend the main seat adjacent the second wheel arch.

14. The vehicle of claim 13, further including:

- a front section, a rear section and an intermediate section extending therebetween, the vehicle having a floor spanning over the front, intermediate and rear sections and laterally extending between opposed

first and second lateral side walls thereof, the rear section including the interior rear seat;

- a two-level floor having an upper floor level defining the front and rear sections and a lower floor level defining the intermediate section, the two-level floor laterally extending between the first and second lateral side walls.

15. The vehicle of claim 14, wherein the rear cabin portion includes the intermediate and rear sections of the vehicle, the front section defining a front cabin portion of the vehicle, the vehicle further including:

- a partition wall extending between and connecting to the first and second lateral side walls, the partition wall separating the front and rear cabin portions from one another.

16. The vehicle of claim 15, wherein the partition wall substantially covers a lower half portion of an opening between the front and rear cabin portions, the vehicle further including:

- a generally transparent protective sheet connected to the partition wall and the first and second lateral side walls, the protective sheet substantially covering an upper half portion of the opening between the front and rear cabin portions.

17. The vehicle of claim 15, further including:

- at least one jump seat located into the rear cabin portion, the jump seat having a retractable seating portion and a backrest portion thereof, the seating portion connecting to the lower floor level of the floor and being retractable between a retracted unused position and an extended use position, the backrest portion connecting to the partition wall.

18. The vehicle of claim 17, wherein the at least one jump seat is rearwardly oriented within the rear cabin portion generally facing the main seat.

5 19. The vehicle of claim 17, further including:

- at least one grab handle connecting to one of the first and second lateral side walls and inwardly extending therefrom so as to allow easy grabbing thereof by a passenger, the grab handle being located adjacent the rear seat.

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20. The vehicle of claim 19, wherein the front cabin portion includes a driver seat adjacent one of the first and second lateral side walls, the vehicle further including:

- a luggage compartment located between the driver seat and the other one of the first and second lateral side walls.
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21. The vehicle of claim 19, wherein the front cabin portion includes a driver seat adjacent one of the first and second lateral side walls, the vehicle being a taxi vehicle and further including:

- a driver console located adjacent the driver seat opposite the one of the first and second lateral side walls, the driver console including a taxi meter.
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22. The vehicle of claim 21, further including:

- a display center electrically connected to the driver console for displaying information received therefrom, the display center being located within the rear cabin portion.
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23. The vehicle of claim 22, further including:

- a payment station electrically connected to the driver console, the payment station being located within the rear cabin portion.

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24. The vehicle of claim 23, further including:

- a luggage compartment located between the driver console and the other one of the first and second lateral side walls.

10 25. The vehicle of claim 24, wherein the driver console includes:

- a computer unit mounted therein, the computer unit connecting to the payment station and the display center for control thereof.

26. The vehicle of claim 12, wherein the vehicle is a minivan-type vehicle.

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27. The vehicle of claim 21, wherein the vehicle is a minivan-type vehicle.

28. A method for modifying a production vehicle into a motor vehicle for taxiing passengers, the vehicle having a main seat located in a vehicle rear cabin portion thereof and first and second rear interior covers connected to respective first and second inner vehicle skin surfaces, the first and second interior covers being located adjacent respective first and second inwardly projecting wheel arches of the vehicle, the main seat having generally opposed first and second end side portions thereof, the first end side portion being
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25 located adjacent the first wheel arch, the method comprising:

- connecting a first rear interior side panel to the first inner vehicle skin surface in replacement of the first interior cover, the first side panel having a first seating portion thereof, the first seating portion being continuous with the first end side portion so as to extend the main seat adjacent the first wheel arch.

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29. The method of claim 28, further comprising:

- connecting a second rear interior side panel to the second inner vehicle skin surface in replacement of the second interior cover, the second side panel having a second seating portion thereof, the second seating portion being continuous with the second end side portion so as to extend the main seat adjacent the second wheel arch.

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30. The method of claim 29, wherein the vehicle further has a front section, a rear section and an intermediate section extending therebetween, the vehicle having a floor spanning over the front, intermediate and rear sections and laterally extending between opposed first and second lateral side walls thereof, the rear section including the interior rear seat, the method comprising:

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- lowering an intermediate portion of the floor of the vehicle intermediate section into a lower floor level, the floor portion of the vehicle front and rear sections defining an upper floor level.

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- connecting a second rear interior side panel to the second inner vehicle skin surface in replacement of the second interior cover, the second side panel having a second seating portion thereof, the second seating portion being continuous with the second end side portion so as to extend the main seat adjacent the second wheel arch.

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31. The method of claim 30, wherein the rear cabin portion includes the intermediate and rear sections of the vehicle, the front section defining a front cabin portion of the vehicle, the method comprising:

- 5 - installing a partition wall to separate the front and rear cabin portions from one another, the partition wall extending between and connecting to the first and second lateral side walls.

32. The method of claim 31, further comprising:

- 10 - installing at least one jump seat into the rear cabin portion, the jump seat having a retractable seating portion and a backrest portion thereof, the seating portion connecting to the lower floor level of the floor and being retractable between a retracted unused position and an extended use position, the backrest portion connecting to the partition wall.

15 33. The method of claim 32, further comprising:

- installing at least one grab handle adjacent the rear seat, the grab handle connecting to one of the first and second lateral side walls and inwardly extending therefrom so as to allow easy grabbing thereof by a passenger.

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34. The method of claim 33, wherein the front cabin portion includes a driver seat and a passenger seat adjacent the first and second lateral side walls respectively, the method further comprising:

- 25 - installing a luggage compartment between the driver seat and the second lateral side wall in replacement of the passenger seat.

35. The method of claim 33, wherein the front cabin portion includes a driver seat adjacent one of the first and second lateral side walls, the vehicle being a taxi vehicle, the method further comprising:

- 5 - installing a driver console located adjacent the driver seat opposite the one of the first and second lateral side walls, the driver console including a taxi meter.

36. The method of claim 35, further comprising:

- 10 - installing a display center within the rear cabin portion, the display center being electrically connected to the driver console for displaying information received therefrom.

37. The method of claim 36, further comprising:

- 15 - installing a payment station within the rear cabin portion, the payment station being electrically connected to the driver console.

38. The method of claim 37, wherein the front cabin portion includes a passenger seat adjacent the other one of the first and second lateral side walls, the method further comprising:

- 20 - installing a luggage compartment between the driver console and the other one of the first and second lateral side walls in replacement of the passenger seat.

39. The method of claim 38, wherein the driver console includes a computer unit mounted therein, the computer unit connecting to the payment station and the display center for control thereof, the method comprising:

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- installing the display center at an upper region of the rear cabin portion adjacent the front cabin portion and a roof of the vehicle;
- installing the payment station adjacent the partition wall.

5 40. The method of claim 29, further comprising:

- installing a predetermined seat within the rear cabin portion in replacement of the main seat, the predetermined seat being more comfortable and more long-lasting than the main seat.

10 41. The method of claim 40, further comprising:

- relocating the main seat further rearward within the rear cabin portion so as to increase the space in front thereof.

15 42. The method of claim 28, wherein the production vehicle is a minivan-type vehicle.

43. The method of claim 35, wherein the production vehicle is a minivan-type vehicle.